The latest news on the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity

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UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity Newsletter

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This newsletter covers:

Updates from Partners | Updates from UNESCO Field Offices | Safety of Women Journalists | New Publications & Resources | Training of Judicial Actors | Journalists Killed in 2023 | and more.

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International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists — 2 November 2023

This year's main commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists will take place on 2 - 3 November, 2023 at the headquarters of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington D.C.

Organized by UNESCO, in partnership with the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), the InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and its Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression (RELE), the event will focus on **the interconnections between violence against journalists, the integrity of elections, and the role of public leadership**. Read more in the concept note here.

Photo: Shutterstock

Over 20 IDEI commemorations around the world

On the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, UNESCO is giving visibility to events dedicated to this day in its official website. More than 20 events dedicated to improving journalists' safety will take place worldwide, including in Costa Rica, South Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Cambodia and more. In addition, a panel discussion will take place at the UN Palais des Nations, in Geneva; and one at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Find more about commemorations around the world or submit information of your event here.

Share on social media

UNESCO is launching a global awareness raising campaign sharing the testimonies of relatives of killed journalists whose cases remain unpunished. To fight against impunity,

their stories need to be heard and the journalists' legacy should be kept alive.

Share the campaign on 2 November.

Prevention

UNESCO Iraq Office celebrates the International Day for Universal Access to Information and the 10th anniversary of the Judges' Initiative

Photo: UNESCO Iraq Office

BAGHDAD, 30 SEPTEMBER — The UNESCO Iraq Office, through the Communications and Information Sector, held an intensive training course for judges of publishing and media courts in all areas of appeal, in the context of a joint UNESCO funding project to enhance freedom of expression and safety of journalists. Read more

UNESCO Iraq Office holds training course on freedom of expression and safety of journalists with journalists and representatives of the Ministry of Interior

Photo: UNESCO Iraq Office

BAGHDAD, 3 OCTOBER — UNESCO in Iraq held a specialized training course on international standards for freedom of expression and opinion and the safety of journalists from legal prosecution in the capital, Baghdad, within the context of the joint project financed by the Multi-donor Programme for Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists. Read more

Media has a role in addressing gender-based violence in South-East Asia

Photo: leungchopan/shutterstock

BANGKOK, 3-4 OCTOBER — Human rights professionals and media representatives from five South-East Asian countries participated in a two-day regional workshop from 3-4 October 2023 in Bangkok. The 'Gender-Sensitive Reporting Workshop in South-East Asia' was organized by the Public Media Alliance, with support provided by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Programme for the Development of Communication. Read more

Forum on the role of digital platforms in supporting democratic rights in Thailand

Photo: Farknot Architect/shutterstock

BANGKOK, 28 SEPTEMBER — UNESCO, in partnership with the Thailand Development Research Institute and Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Communication Arts, hosted an online forum on how internet-based and online information can affect the ability of Thai citizens to exercise their democratic rights. Read more

Centre for Freedom of the Media launches online seminar series

Photo: Centre for Freedom of the Media

SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY, SEPTEMBER — The Centre for Freedom of the Media

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIAL PROCEDURES
SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS, INDEPENDENT EXPERTS & WORKING GROUPS

Russia hits 'new low' with ban against discrediting army: Rights experts

UN NEWS, 28 AUGUST — In response to Russia's criminalization of "public actions

(CFOM) launched its online seminar series in September with legal consultant, Gill Phillips, discussing current challenges that journalists face. She talked about the use of Artificial Intelligence in journalism alongside legal issues such as SLAPPs. The seminar series is held monthly and features experts from civil society organisations, journalism practice and academia talking about issues surrounding journalism safety and media freedom. Upcoming seminars will focus on online violence against journalists and the media's role in a democratic Europe. The link to sign up to attend can be found here.

aimed at discrediting" its Armed Forces, UN-appointed human rights experts voice their alarm, emphasizing the law's impact on press freedom and safety of Journalists. Enacted in the wake of the Ukraine invasion, this legislation has resulted in the arrest of thousands for either protesting the war or allegedly "discrediting" the military. The Special Rapporteurs warn of severe punishments, up to 15 years of imprisonment, awaiting journalists, activists, and human rights defenders, emphasizing an intensifying crackdown on independent voices and media in Russia. Read more

4th meeting of the Committee of Experts on the Integrity of Online Information

Photo: CoE

Roundtable on Gender-friendly Working Environment in Media

Photo: UNESCO Dhaka

STRASBOURG, 18-19 SEPTEMBER — The Committee of Experts on the Integrity of Online Information (MSI-INF) held its fourth meeting the Council of Europe's headquarters in Strasbourg, France. The meeting focused on the finalisation of the Draft Guidance Note and the Draft Explanatory Memorandum. The discussion focused on how to counter the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-

DHAKA, BANGLADESH, 31 AUGUST — Gender-friendly Working Environment in Media was the topic of a roundtable discussion that UNESCO and UN Women conducted on August 31 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The significance of artistic freedom and expression, the social and economic rights of journalists and artists, and the working environment were all open topics of discussion during this consultation. A

checking and platform design solutions with a human rights-based approach. The Expert Committee reached an agreement regarding the content of both documents, therefore decided to forward them to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) for final adoption at its plenary meeting on 29 November - 1 December 2023. Read more

gender-enabling environment in the workplace, safeguarding support by the organizational framework of the media houses, safety of women journalists and women staff is often a big question in the national media and creative industry of Bangladesh. During this consultation, a compilation of the ideas and recommendations from the participants was produced. Read more

How are Media Freedom Coalition embassies making a difference to journalists in Bangladesh?

Photo: Unsplash

26 JULY — Embassies of Media Freedom Coalition member countries are taking a range of actions to support the protection and promotion of media freedom where they are based. In Bangladesh, 15 embassies from four continents have been acting together, publicly and privately, in cooperation with national authorities and partners. Read more

How the Media Freedom Coalition is following up on its strategic workshop

Photo: MFC Secretariat

NEW YORK CITY, 21 JULY — Earlier this year, over 50 senior figures from governments, civil society, academia and UNESCO gathered to discuss one question: how can we maximise the impact of the Media Freedom Coalition? The workshop resulted in a series of recommendations and this blog explains some of the steps being taken to implement them. Read more

Human rights awareness as a tool for journalist safety in the Americas

Photo: Wilson Vitorino/Pexels

MONTEVIDEO, 11 JULY — More than 80 journalists from different parts of Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe participated in the 6th Edition of the Diploma in Human Rights for Journalists, organised by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the UNESCO Regional Office in Montevideo. Read more

Rethinking the challenges and proposals for journalism in Latin America

Photo: Freepik

MONTEVIDEO, 24 AUGUST — In the Sala Acuña de Figueroa of the annex of the Legislative Palace in Uruguay, journalists and experts participated in three roundtable discussions to analyse sustainability challenges faced by the media in the region as well as possible solutions to ensure the functioning of independent journalism. Read more

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media holds roundtable on the issue of digital safety

Photo: Shutterstock

VIENNA, 13 SEPTEMBER — The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media held a roundtable on the issue of digital safety of journalists. Bringing together digital and human rights experts, the roundtable addressed challenges related to online violence, protection of sources and the use of surveillance technologies as well as other challenges emanating from the digital sphere. It was the 7th roundtable conducted in the framework of the Safety of Journalists project, which will include the launch of a Toolbox for the Safety of Journalists on the 22nd of November. Read more

Protection

US Ambassador to the UN vows to bring detained journalist home

Photo: UNIFEED

NEW YORK CITY, 13 SEPTEMBER — US Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield spoke to the media together with Evan Gershkovich's family, an American journalist who has been detained since March this year, and said, "The United States will not rest until Evan and Paul and all wrongfully detained Americans are home safe and sound." Evan Gershkovich's sister, Danielle Gershkovich, said, "We are here to remind the world that Evan is innocent, and journalism is not a crime." Read more

Publications and Resources

In September and October 2023, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media issued two communiqués on freedom of the media during elections and on the use of digital surveillance technology on journalists.

OSCE Communiqué: Freedom of the Media during Elections

Photo: OSCE

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media issued a communiqué underscoring the pivotal role of media freedom during elections on 3 October. She urged authorities of all OSCE participating States and electoral contenders to uphold their democratic duty by respecting and safeguarding the crucial democratic role of the media, especially during election periods. She underlined that undermining actions by those who play a key role in the democratic process are unacceptable as they escalate the risk of assaults on journalists and foment distrust in media. Read more

OSCE Communiqué: Use of Digital Surveillance Technology on Journalists

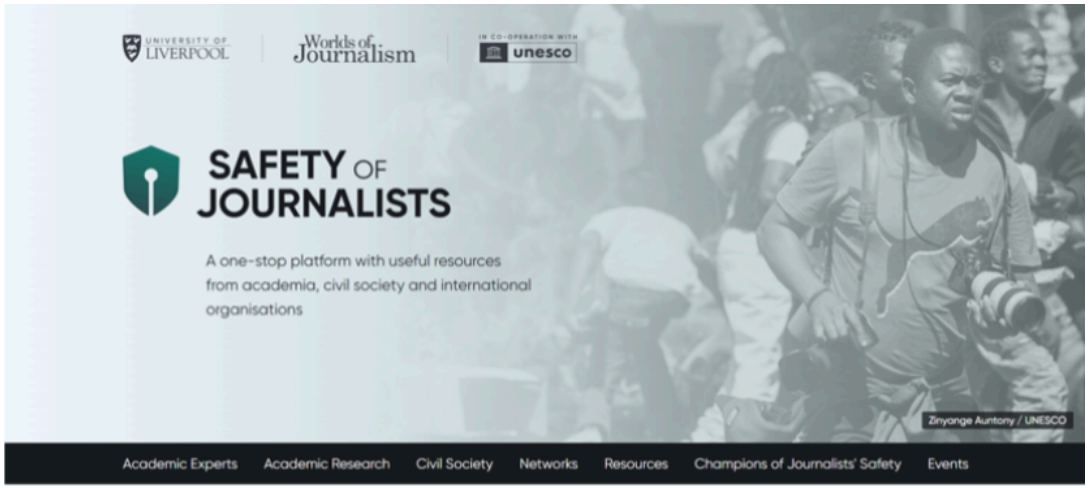
Photo: Tero Vesalainen/Shutterstock

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro issued a communiqué on the use of digital surveillance technology on journalists on 7 September. The document underscores that the use of digital surveillance technology poses a significant threat to media freedom and impedes the ability of the media to function safely. Read more

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media launches new Guidelines

Photo: OSCE

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media launched the Guidelines for monitoring online violence against female journalists at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference. The Guidelines provide a systematic monitoring and reporting system aiming to better protect women journalists and prevent online violence from escalating. The tool includes a set of 15 research-derived indicators for online violence escalation, a gendered online violence typology, and examples of violations mapped to international codes and standards. Read more



New one-stop academic platform on safety of journalists

A new open one-stop platform on the safety of journalists was launched on 4 October 2023 by the University of Liverpool and the Worlds of Journalism Study in co-operation with UNESCO. The platform bridges the gap between the different stakeholders in the implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and facilitates multi-stakeholder collaborations. It contains hundreds of studies, interviews with champions of safety, reports, toolboxes, databases and profiles of academic experts and key NGOs. New submissions are welcome to platform lead Dr Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova. Read more and visit the website.

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Learn more about UNESCO's work to protect freedom of expression and the safety of journalists

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Journalist killings condemned by the UNESCO Director-General in August 2023 and September 2023:

- Ghulam Ashgar Khand (7 August, Pakistan)
- Firas al-Ahmad (9 August, Syria)
- Edin Frangeli Alonzo López (11 August, Guatemala)
- Hugo Rolando Gutiérrez Alonzo (11 August, Guatemala)
- Jan Mohammad Mahar (13 August, Pakistan)
- Najm el-Din Faisal Haj Sinan (23 August, Syria)
- Jesús Gutiérrez Vergara (24 September, Mexico)

Visit UNESCO's Observatory of Killed Journalists

READ PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE NEWSLETTER

UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity - Newsletter

As part of the information sharing mechanism under the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, UNESCO issues this newsletter once every two months. Through this newsletter, we share with you information on the implementation of the UN Plan of Action. It includes developments from various ongoing and upcoming initiatives that could contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the UN Plan of Action. We invite you to submit relevant information concerning your initiative that would contribute to the UN Plan.

Visit our website **for more information.**

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